

The President of the Generalitat of Catalonia presented the Prize on 26th October at the Palau de la Generalitat

## **The North American researcher Harold A. Mooney was awarded the 2007 Ramon Margalef Prize in Ecology and Environmental Sciences**

**Mooney is an international leader in the study of problems related to the loss of biodiversity and climate change**

**He has published several books and articles in order to promote an interest among society in science**

Wednesday, September 19

The President of the Generalitat of Catalonia, José Montilla, presided the Board of Administration of the 2007 Ramon Margalef Prize in Ecology and Environmental Sciences, which decided to award this year's honour to the North American researcher Harold A. Mooney. Mooney is considered to be one of the pioneers in the study of plant physiological ecology and has centred his work on research and the assessment of phenomena which affect global changes, such as ecological invasions, the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems. Thanks to his work, he has become an international leader in assessment projects at political level, on environmental problems related to climate change.

### **Researcher and publisher**

Mooney's work consists in measuring the adaptations of individual plants, measuring the processes of ecosystems and showing how human-induced ecological disturbances modify the functioning of the Earth as a whole. He has demonstrated that several species of plants develop the same physiological characteristics in response to the same local environment. Thanks to his research, universities around the world are creating global departments dedicated to ecological research. Mooney has published several books on science as well as articles in order to promote an interest among society in science.

Mooney earned his doctorate at Duke University and is currently associate professor of Environmental Biology at Stanford University, in California. He has played an essential role in the assessment of international study of biodiversity through the DIVERSITAS programme and the Millenium Ecosystem Assessment.

Thanks to his expertise, Harold A. Mooney was awarded this honour from among 17 candidates for the 2007 Ramon Margalef Prize in Ecology and Environmental Sciences. This is the first international prize exclusively in the field of ecology and is worth one hundred thousand euros.

The prize-giving ceremony took place on 26th October at the Palau de la Generalitat. During the ceremony, as well as the prize of one hundred thousand euros, Harold A. Mooney was presented with an award in the shape of a kaleidoscope. The prize was conferred upon Professors Paul K. Dayton (2005) and Sir John Lawton (2006), in the first and second edition, respectively.

### **Ramon Margalef, one of the leading scientists of all time**

Due to the absence of prizes awarded in this subject and taking into account the great contribution that Catalonia has made in the field of ecology, in 2004 the Catalan Government decided to create this prize under the name of Ramon Margalef (Barcelona 1919-2004). Ramon Margalef was one of the most outstanding Catalan scientists of all time and, without doubt, one of the greatest scientists of the 20th century. The figure of Margalef contributed decisively to the development of modern ecological science to the point of his being considered one of the most respected figures in the scientific world, to a large extent thanks to having been able to interpret natural systems in terms of information theory.